

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 OMB-01 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 HA-05 /096 W
-----060263 260947Z /17

P 260922Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9892
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
USMISSION USNATO
COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA AB JA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 13490

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, MARR, JA
SUBJECT: GENERAL KURISU FIRED

REF: TOKYO 06979

1. SUMMARY: OUTSPOKEN CHAIRMAN OF JAPAN'S JOINT STAFF COUNCIL WAS REMOVED ON JULY 25 FOR SAYING JAPANESE FORCES COULD TAKE "EXTRA LEGAL" EMERGENCY ACTIONS IN CASE OF INVASION WHEN EXPRESS PERMISSION OF GOJ WAS UNATTAINABLE IN TIME. REMARK WAS CONSIDERED CHALLENGE TO PRINCIPLE OF CIVILIAN CONTROL OVER DEFENSE FORCES. FIRING DEMONSTRATES THAT EVEN THOUGH GOJ HAS RECENTLY BEEN TAKING MORE ACTIVE POSTURE ON DEFENSE ISSUES, DOMESTIC POLITICAL CONSTRAINTS CONTINUE TO IMPOSE SEVERE LIMITS. END SUMMARY.

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2. GENERAL HIROOMI KURISU HAD ONLY BEEN CHAIRMAN OF JAPAN'S SELF DEFENSE FORCES' JOINT STAFF COUNCIL FOR NINE MONTHS WHEN HE WAS REMOVED JULY 25. DISMISSAL OF HIGH-RANKING OFFICER WAS FIRST IN SELF DEFENSE FORCES' 27 YEAR HISTORY. STATEMENT THAT PLACED KURISU IN TESERIOUS TROUBLE WAS HIS CLAIM IN MAGAZINE INTERVIEW

EARLIER IN JULY THAT, SINCE EXISTING LAWS, INCLUDING SELF DEFENSE FORCES LAW, HAD NOTHING TO SAY ABOUT WHAT FORCES COULD DO IF CONFRONTED WITH SUDDEN EMERGENCY, LOCAL COMMANDERS SHOULD BE FREE TO DECIDE ON APPROPRIATE ACTION RATHER THAN AWAIT ORDERS. AMONG EXAMPLES HE USED WERE MSDF SHIP COMING UPON JAPANESE FISHING BOAT BEING SEIZED BY FOREIGN SHIP AND GROUND FORCES COMING UNDER SURPRISE ATTACK BY INVADING FOREIGN FORCES. TOO MUCH TIME WOULD BE REQUIRED FOR COMMANDERS TO REPORT INCIDENTS AND AWAIT ORDERS, HE SAID. KURISU ADDED THAT EXISTING LAWS WOULD NOT EVEN ALLOW JAPANESE COMMANDERS TO ORDER RETREAT IF THEY CAME UNDER ATTACK.

3. DEFENSE DIRGEN KANEMARU, WHO HIMSELF HAS BEEN, IN JAPANESE CONTEXT, ACTIVIST ON DEFENSE ISSUES IN HIS SPEECHES AND STATEMENTS IN DIET, ANNOUNCED KURISU'S REMOVAL AFTER CONFERRING WITH PRIMIN ON JULY 25. REPLACEMENT WILL BE GENERAL TAKEHIKO TAKASHIMA, PRESENTLY CHIEF OF GROUND STAFF OFFICE, SUBJECT TO CABINET APPROVAL.

4. IN DISCUSSING KURISU'S REMOVAL, KANEMARU TOLD PRESS THAT ADVOCACY OF ANY SORT OF "EXTRA-LEGAL" ACTIVITY, EVEN IN SURPRISE ATTACK, COULD NOT BE PERMITTED BECAUSE IT CONTRAVENED PRINCIPLE OF CIVILIAN CONTROL OF ARMED CONFIDENTIAL

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FORCES. ALL NATIONWIDE DAILIES OF JULY 26 RAN DAILIES EDITORIALS SUPPORTING KANEMARU'S STAND.

5. IN PRESS CONFERENCE OF HIS OWN ON 25TH, KURISU ANNOUNCED HIS RESIGNATION AND DENIED THAT HE HAD HAD ANY INTENTION OF QUESTIONING SYSTEM OF CIVILIAN CONTROL. HIS DISCLAIMER IS SUSPECT, HOWEVER, SINCE HE HAS LONG BEEN OUTSPOKEN ADVOCATE OF MORE INDEPENDENCE ON PART OF UNIFORMED MILITARY. ONE EXAMPLE WAS HIS PUBLIC SUGGESTION LAST OCTOBER THAT, EMPEROR RATHER THAN CIVILIAN POLITICIANS SHOULD APPOINT CHAIRMAN OF JOINT STAFF COUNCIL, THEREBY IMPLICITLY CONFERRING CABINET STATUS ON HIM. HE HAD ALSO GONE SO FAR AS TO SUGGEST PUBLICLY THAT JAPAN DEVELOP PRE-EMPTIVE ATTACK CAPABILITY SINCE GOOD OFFENSE WAS BEST DEFENSE. PRESS HAS FURTHER REPORTED THAT KURISU HAS BROKEN BIGGEST TABOO OF ALL BY ADVOCATING NUCLEAR CAPABILITY FOR DEFENSE FORCES. WIDESPREAD BELIEF IS THAT KURISU HAD BEEN MAKING CONTROVERSIAL, HAWKISH REMARKS IN ORDER TO ADVANCE HIS OWN PUBLIC IMAGE WITH PRO-MILITARY GROUPS (E.G., VETERANS) PRELIMINARY TO HIS RUNNING FOR DIET.

6. COMMENT: GOVERNMENT FIRED KURISU BECAUSE IT HAD TO. KANEMARU (AND FUKUDA) TOOK UNCHARACTERISTICALLY DECISIVE ACTION, WHICH HAS ALREADY SPARKED PUBLIC PROTESTS FROM THEIR FRIENDS IN THE LDP'S RIGHT WING AND REPORTED GRUMBLING FROM OTHER SDF OFFICES, BECAUSE NOT TO DO SO WOULD HAVE LED TO PUBLIC UPROAR. PRESS HAS UNANIMOUSLY SUPPORTED GOJ DECISION. AS EMBASSY HAS REPORTED (REF-TEL), IN RECENT MONTHS GOJ HAS BEEN MORE POSITIVE AND FORTHCOMING ON DEFENSE ISSUES BOTH IN DIET AND TALKS

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WITH USG OFFICIALS. THAT NEW ATTITUDE WAS APPLICABLE TO ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS FOR WHICH LEGAL FRAMEWORK HAD ALREADY BEEN ESTABLISHED, NOT TO MAIN PRINCIPLES OF JAPAN'S DEFENSE POLICY WHICH REMAIN UNCHANGED. BASICALLY, THOSE PRINCIPLES ARE: CIVILIAN CONTROL OF MILITARY; ARMED FORCES STRICTLY FOR DEFENSIVE PURPOSES ONLY, AND NON-TOLERANCE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. WHILE GOJ HAD BECOME NOTICEABLY MORE FLEXIBLE IN INTERPRETING EXISTING RULES ON SUCH ISSUES AS JOINT USE OF FACILITIES WITH U.S. FORCES AND COST-SHARING, AND WHILE SOME UNIFORMED OFFICERS AND CIVILIANS IN DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENTS MAY PRIVATELY HOLD VIEWS SIMILAR TO THOSE OF KURISU'S, GOJ PUBLICLY HAD NOT SHOWN ANY WILLINGNESS TO CHANGE THOSE BASIC PARAMETERS. MANSFIELD

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARMED FORCES, MILITARY PERSONNEL, MILITARY PLANS, REMOVAL FROM OFFICE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978TOKYO13490
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780306-0296
Format: TEL
From: TOKYO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780717/aaaaanxq.tel
Line Count: 169
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: c5e6576c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 TOKYO 6979
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1874774
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GENERAL KURISU FIRED
TAGS: PINT, MARR, JA, (KURISU, HIROOMI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c5e6576c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014